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MBRAS Lecture 2015

“The Concept of Nusantara”

by Hans-Dieter Evers

Badan Warisan Malaysia (BWM),

2 Jalan Stonor,

Kuala Lumpur

Saturday, 12 December 2015, 5 p.m.

**Abstract**

Words can turn into powerful concepts shaping the course of history. Nusantara, a word of Sanskrit origin, turns up in Javanese and Malay manuscripts of the 14th century and is used to define the realm of the Majapahit Empire and the Malay world. The paper will trace the origin of the concept and its reappearance in the Indonesian struggle for independence. Subsequently the sudden reflowering of the concept in the 1970s will be explained and its current relevance for the conflicts surrounding the South China Sea will be demonstrated.

**Hans-Dieter Evers** is emeritus university professor of development planning, University of Bielefeld and senior fellow, Center for Development Research, University of Bonn. He is currently a visiting professor at the Institute of Ethnic Studies, National University of Malaysia (Universiti Kebangsaan Malaysia). Formerly he taught sociology at Yale University (where he was also Director of Graduate Southeast Asia Studies and still is Consulting Editor, Yale Southeast Asia Studies), at the National University of Singapore and Monash University. He also held visiting positions at Trinity College Oxford, Universitas Indonesia, Universitas Gadjah Mada, Universiti Sains Malaysia, EHESS Paris, Singapore Management University, National University of Singapore (Distinguished Visiting Professor) and Universiti Brunei Darussalam (Eminent Visiting Professor).

His current research is concerned with the governance of the South China Sea and Southeast Asian knowledge societies. Among his authored or co-edited books are *Beyond the Knowledge Trap: Developing Asia's Knowledge-Based Economies* (World Scientific 2011), *Governing and Managing Knowledge in Asia*, 2nd revised edition (World Scientific 2010), *The Straits of Malacca. Knowledge and Diversity* (LIT 2008), *Southeast Asian Urbanism: The Meaning and Power of Social Space* (LIT/ISEAS/McGrawHill 2000), translated as *Urbanisme di Asia Tenggara* (Yayasan Obor Indonesia, 2002). Among his most cited/downloaded recent papers are “Understanding the South China Sea: An Explorative Cultural Analysis.” *International Journal of Asia-Pacific Studies* 10(1): 77–93; and, with Solvay Gerke, “Selat Melaka: Jalur Sempit Perdagangan Dunia.” *Akademika* 81(1): 5–14.

Personal websites: <https://ukm-my.academia.edu/HansDieterEvers> and  
<https://sites.google.com/site/hansdieterevers/>. E-mail: [hdevers@uni-bonn.de](mailto:hdevers@uni-bonn.de)

**The Lecture**



